



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Administration

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

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Media Contact: Raquel Filmanowicz
414-397-1614 (cell)

First Positive Detection of West Nile Virus in Mosquito Pool

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) recorded its first positive West Nile Virus (WNV) mosquito pool of the season and is reminding citizens that the virus is present within the community. The MHD conducts bird, mosquito and human WNV surveillance to monitor infections and trends in disease occurrence within the region.

Since June, the MHD has conducted surveillance at 20 locations within the City of Milwaukee. Recently three mosquito “pools” came back positive for WNV. These three pools represent the first in Wisconsin this season. The MHD conducts mosquito surveillance from June through the end of September. August and September typically represent the peak of WNV human infections in the Midwest. West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted to humans through a bite from an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire WNV through contact with infected birds.

“Stagnant water within the community from previous heavy and persistent rainfall has created conditions favorable for mosquito breeding. More mosquitoes present a greater opportunity for contact with birds and humans and potentially the transmission of WNV disease,” said Bevan K. Baker, Commissioner of Health.

The MHD recommends that residents take the following actions to minimize risk of WNV infection until the first frost, after which mosquito populations rapidly decline.

- Persons who spend significant time outdoors should use mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Mosquitoes are particularly active at dusk and dawn. Long sleeved clothing is also recommended to avoid mosquito bites.
- Eliminate areas of standing water in and around the home, such as discarded containers, tires, etc. Bird baths should be emptied and refilled weekly. Rain gutters should be checked for clogging and reopened as necessary.
- Repair damaged screens in doors and windows that would allow mosquitos into living spaces.

For further information call 414-286-3521 or visit the MHD website at www.milwaukee.gov/health